Program: IFSA-Butler Argentina Study Abroad Programs, Year

Jenna’s Majors: International Studies, Spanish

Academic Life: My first semester in Buenos Aires I chose to participate in one of the program’s Academic Concentrations in Human Rights. As part of the concentration, I interned at a local NGO called Fundación Huésped where I served as a research assistant studying the biological and social aspects of HIV/AIDS. The most rewarding part of this academic experience was the opportunity to write a research paper on the relationship between HIV/AIDS and sex work in Latin America. My connection to Fundación Huésped gave me access to interviews I would not have been able to conduct otherwise. During the second semester I took my classes directly with Argentine students in order to take advantage of a more complete immersion experience. The environment at UBA is electric and chaotic, and I enjoyed every second of it.

Most Memorable Moments: The best decision I made during my time abroad was signing up for an extra-curricular theater improvisation class. This class forced me to learn to think on my feet and allowed me to play with the Spanish language in a new and interesting way. Most importantly, through this class I met an amazing group of Argentinians who I now consider to be life-long friends. Being the only foreigner in the class forced me to step outside my comfort zone, connect with those around me, and grow in creativity and confidence.

Tips for Someone Considering Studying Abroad: If you have the opportunity to study abroad a full academic year, I highly recommend it. While the semester experience is very valuable, it was during my second semester abroad that I truly began to fall in love with Argentina. I felt like I spent my first semester running around the city trying to figure out where I needed to be, building my Spanish language skills, desperately trying to make friends, and traveling. Towards the very end of the first semester was when I finally started to feel like Buenos Aires was truly my home.

“Buenos Aires is such a dynamic city; there is always something to do!”